

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County

Equity Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 17, 2023.

3:00 – 4:00pm

Zoom Video Conference

Present:

Shym Cook
Becky Degendorfer
Karen Gerdin
Yolanda McIntosh
Aalayha Robb
Mary Russell
Tracy Wilson

Absent:

Mohamed Mourssi-Alfash
Lauren Hunter
Tanya Velishek

Staff/Guests:

Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions
Michelle Belitz, Workforce Solutions
Mariann Macalus, Workforce Solutions
Zaire Mays, Workforce Solutions
Rebecca Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Becker called the meeting to order at 3:01pm. Degendorfer read the land acknowledgement aloud.

Approve May Minutes

Motion (Wilson/Gerdin) to approve the May 15, 2023, minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.

Committee Work Plan/Project Updates

Becker provided updates on the following:

DEI Consulting Request for Proposals – Scope of Service: The current contract with The Center for Economic Inclusion (CEI) for the cohort is coming to an end. A Request for Proposal (RFP) is being worked on which will blend both WIB and Workforce Solutions (WFS) funds. Becker explained the county procurement process and shared information about the three components: 1) Inclusive Workplaces Cohort facilitation, 2) virtual Inclusive Employer Toolkit information sessions and articles, and 3) fair opportunities technical assistance). The RFP will be released later this summer. Milbrandt provided more details of the first component which will follow the current cohort model. Becker shared there is funding for component one but there is no funding currently in place for the second and third components. Zero dollars contracts will be written for those two components until they are funded with project funds in 2024. Becker shared the timeline and evaluation criteria and stated if anyone is interested in reviewing the proposals to let Milbrandt know. Wilson and McIntosh offered to assist.

Inclusive Hiring Guide: Becker provided an update on the toolkit which will be launched in mid-August and provided an explanation on the different sections. This is still being worked on to add more graphics, improve ease of access, and enhance the design.

Inclusive Workplaces Cohort: Russell provided an update on the last cohort session which focused on the results of the Racial Equity Index. Members of the cohort see this as a learning opportunity to help organizations focus on their DEI efforts. The cohort facilitators are doing an excellent job at facilitating and reminding participants about what is upcoming so they arrive prepared for the sessions.

Untapped/Data De-aggregation Effort: Efforts continue to get organizations to spend time on this topic. Since there is agreement that it is important, some shifting has been done to share a few culturally relevant data points with one partner at a time. Real Time Talent will help with this later in the fall.

Director's Updates

Becker provided updates on the following:

Fair Opportunities Efforts: The community advisory group continued to meet to advise on and support events under the theme of “Fair Opportunities Employment, Let’s Get to Work”. Plans are to have a large

presence at the Selby JazzFest on September 9. With the Second Chance Grant, Wilson shared that there is incentive to get individuals back to work and education is an option with pathways for getting a job. *Supervisory Training:* WFS continues to work with World Youth Connect on launching training for Ramsey County employers in the fall. This training is an opportunity for both new and existing youth supervisors and employers to learn essential youth and young adult onboarding, retention and communication skills and strategies to ensure a positive work environment for everyone. Becker shared a graph showing the percentage of Minnesotans who report having experienced employment discrimination in 2021. Those interested in attending the last test run of the training on Thursday can contact Milbrandt. *New Learn & Earn Partners:* Becker shared that \$10M of ARPA funding was allocated for Learn & Earn programs. She provided a slide showing the partners who are working together. All programs will provide paid training, blending hands-on with classroom learning. Program flyers will be sent in the follow-up.

Other

- Becker introduced Mays, WFS' Right Track intern. Mays shared her background.
 - Russell raised a question on if the recent Supreme Court decision on affirmative action had to do with education. How do we keep an eye on what's going on? Is it employers or DEI initiatives? Race tells a lot of stories about economic barriers.
 - Becker shared information on various legislative efforts and considered what the impacts may be.
 - Cook gave an update on the traffic at CareerForce Saint Paul, both for walk-ins and workshops.
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Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 3:57pm.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 18, 2023, 3:00-4:00pm. via Zoom